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Organization: none

Title of Hearing: Hearing on Responding to Long-Term Unemployment

June 9, 2010

Dear Committee Members:

My position as an IT Systems Manager was eliminated in January of 2008, and I am among the growing number of long term unemployed who have exhausted all available weeks of unemployment benefits. In addition to sixteen years experience as an IT professional, I have a PhD and am a published author of scientific research, and I was an award winning teacher at a major university. However, after submitting hundreds of applications in the nearly two and a half years since I was laid off, I can count the number of interviews that I have received on a single hand. This has been nothing less than devastating: my savings are gone, I have amassed a tremendous credit debt, I am living on food stamps, and I am receiving health care from my state.

Unfortunately, with only about one available job for every six jobless Americans (not including the very long-term unemployed, who have fallen out of the statistics) there is simply very little hope of finding work for highly qualified baby boomers like myself (I'm 52 years old). We are often considered to be over qualified for lower paid positions and a fight risk for somewhat higher paying ones... and at the same time these kinds of positions have all but replaced many of the positions that more closely match our qualifications. In the IT world, for example, there has been a shift in job openings toward internships and entry level positions for new college graduates, as companies try to minimize the amount they spend on wages and benefits. Combine this with the fact that employment agencies are now indicating that their clients will not hire anyone who has been unemployed for a long period of time, and there is very little hope indeed for the nearly seven million long-term jobless Americans in general, much less baby boomers who, like myself, have reached the point of exhausting all available benefits.

And now we who, through no fault of our own, have suffered the most from this recession, are, in effect, being thrown under the bus. We have pleaded with Congress, the Senate, and the President to please add a Tier 5 or more weeks of benefits to Tier 4, for all states, so that fewer of us will end up on the streets and

starving. This is literally a matter of life and death for us, and we are incensed beyond words by Speaker Nancy Pelosi for laughing at the long-term unemployed, along with her audience of reporters, over our phone calls, faxes, and emails begging for help.

We are equally incensed by arguments against adding more weeks of benefits over concerns about the deficit. Where was the concern in instituting two unfunded wars, or multi-trillions of dollars in bank bailouts, or unfunded trillion dollar Bush tax cuts... and how can you possibly justify paying down deficit on the backs of those who have suffered most in this recession, many of which have quite literally lost everything, or are on the verge of doing so?

Moreover, adding weeks simply makes good economic sense, as the as has been pointed out by renowned economists such as Nobel laureate Paul Krugman. Unemployment benefits are stimulative to the economy, because virtually every cent that is received gets spent in short order on basic necessities. Indeed, Mark Zandi of economy.com estimates that the stimulative effect is about \$1.73 for every dollar spent. Keeping our lifeline going helps keep our local economies afloat, and gives those of us who still have one, a fighting chance to hold on to our homes.

Adding more weeks, for all states, is simply the right thing to do. Please do the right thing. Please don't throw us under the bus.

Sincerely,

Jeff Gilardi